

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 242

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 6616

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR JA

SUBJ: JAPAN'S NATIONAL INTEREST AND FOREIGN POLICY IN SOUTHEAST
ASIA

SUMMARY: IN WAKE OF SAIGON'S FALL, JAPANESE PRIMARY INTERESTS IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED: ACCESS TO MARKETS
AND RAW MATERIALS AND THE SECURITY OF ITS TANKER ROUTE TO
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THE MIDDLE EAST. THESE INTERESTS WILL REMAIN UNAFFECTED
BY HANOI'S VICTORY AS LONG AS THERE ARE NO DRAMATIC POLITICAL
CHANGES WITHIN THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS AND THE UNITED
STATES RETAINS A STRONG MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE WESTERN

PACIFIC. THE JAPANESE EXPECT THE ASEAN GOVERNMENTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH HANOI AND PEKING, BUT NOT TO MOVE FAR LEFTWARD INTERNALLY. THEY EXPECT THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL KEEP ITS MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC AND THAT SOME CONTINUING AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WILL BE WELCOMED BY THE GOVERNMENTS THERE AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO COPE WITH GROWING SINO-SOVIET COMPETITION FOR ADVANTAGE. JAPAN WILL NOT CHANGE ITS POLICY SIGNIFICANTLY. IT WILL ACCELERATE THE POLICY ADOPTED AFTER THE PARIS ACCORDS WERE SIGNED OF DEVELOPING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH HANOI AND WILL SEEK RELATIONS WITH SAIGON AND PHNOM PENH. IN FACT, IT IS LIKELY THAT JAPAN WILL STAND TO GAIN SIGNIFICANTLY THROUGH TRADE OPPORTUNITIES EXPECTED AS INDOCHINESE STATES MOVE FROM WARTIME ECONOMY TO RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS. AT THE SAME TIME, JAPAN WILL ADD NEW EMPHASIS TO ITS RELATIONS WITH THE ASEAN COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY INDONESIA, SEEKING TO BOLSTER THESE COUNTRIES VIS-A-VIS HANOI. IT WILL PROBABLY EXPAND AID TO THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES. JAPAN WILL TRY TO STAY OUT OF SINO-SOVIET CONTESTS IN THE AREA. US INTERESTS WILL NOT SUFFER FROM THE BUSY, CONSTRUCTIVE AND PROBABLY LUCRATIVE ROLE THAT JAPAN ENVISAGES FOR ITSELF IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE THE FALL OF SAIGON, GOJ HAS BEEN WEIGHING THE EFFECTS OF THAT EVENT ON ITS INTERESTS AND POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, INCLUDING INDOCHINA. AS SURPRISED AND SHOCKED AS EVERYONE WAS AT THE SPEED OF THE GVN COLLAPSE, THE JAPANESE HAD NEVERTHELESS BEEN ANTICIPATING THE EVENT FOR SOME TIME. IN FACT, AS EARLY AS 1973 WHEN THE PARIS ACCORDS WERE SIGNED, THE GOJ BEGAN ADJUSTING ITS POLICY TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER IN INDOCHINA. AS A RESULT, OUR EXTENSIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON THIS SUBJECT SINCE THE SURRENDER OF SAIGON HAVE REFLECTED, NOT THE "GROPING" FOR A NEW JAPANESE ROLE IN ASIA PICTURED IN THE PRESS, BUT A MEASURED AND COOL-EYED APPROACH TO THE NEW SITUATION. WHAT FOLLOWS IS OUR ASSESSMENT, BASED IN PART ON THESE DISCUSSIONS, OF HOW THE RULING CONSERVATIVE
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ESTABLISHMENT IN JAPAN NOW VIEWS THE PROSPECTS FOR THE AREA, AND THE POLICY RESPONSES REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THEIR INTERESTS.

2. JAPAN'S INTERESTS IN THE REGION -- JAPANESE INTERESTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA REMAIN THE SAME. THE GOJ WANTS TO MAINTAIN ACCESS TO THE RAW MATERIALS AND MARKETS OF THE REGION, AND TO ASSURE UNHINDERED USE OF ITS TANKER ROUTE TO THE MIDDLE EAST. JAPAN'S ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN THE AREA ARE HEAVILY CONCENTRATED IN THE ASEAN COUNTRIES, RATHER THAN THOSE WHICH HAVE RECENTLY COME UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL. HOWEVER, THE INDOCHINESE STATES ARE IMPORTANT TO JAPAN AS EXISTING AND EVEN GREATER POTENTIAL MARKETS. IDEOLOGY MATTERS LITTLE

AS LONG AS THE NEW COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS PERMIT ECONOMIC RELATIONS. JAPAN'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS WILL REMAIN INTACT AS LONG AS FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS ARE IN POWER ALONG THE TANKER ROUTE, PARTICULARLY IN INDONESIA. THE PROTECTION OF JAPANESE MARITIME INTERESTS IN GENERAL REQUIRES A STRONG US MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC, BUT NOT ON THE ASIAN MAINLAND.

3. JAPANESE POLITICAL INTERESTS SERVE ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS. THEY INCLUDE MAINTAINING STABILITY, AVOIDING CONFLICT, FOSTERING THE GROWTH OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, ESTABLISHING LINKS BETWEEN THE CAPITALIST AND COMMUNIST WORLD AND BETWEEN DEVELOPED NATIONS AND LDC'S, AND FINALLY, SATISFYING A VAGUE BUT GROWING URGE TO PLAY A ROLE AS A LEADING ASIAN POWER.

4. ADJUSTED PERSPECTIVES -- ALTHOUGH JAPAN'S INTERESTS IN THE REGION REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED, THESE MUST NOW BE PURSUED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A "NEW SITUATION". JAPAN RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE MANY VARIABLES IN THIS SITUATION SUCH AS THE RELATIONSHIPS WHICH REMAIN TO BE WORKED OUT AMONG THE THREE INDOCHINESE STATES, HANOI'S RELATIONSHIP WITH PEKING AND MOSCOW, THE RELATIVE WEIGHT OF THE SOVIET UNION AND PRC IN THE REGION, AND THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF FUTURE US INFLUENCE IN THE AREA. NEVERTHELESS, JAPANESE APPEAR TO BE REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THE BROAD OUTLINES OF THE NEW "SITUATION" WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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A. HANOI WILL EXERCISE DOMINANT INFLUENCE IN INDOCHINA AND PERHAPS BEYOND. IT SEES THE UNITED STATES, UNTIL JUST RECENTLY THE PRINCIPAL GREAT POWER OPERATING IN THE AREA, AS NOW ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL SOURCES OF INFLUENCE. CONTINUED US PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, HOWEVER, IS IMPORTANT TO JAPAN AND TO THE STABILITY OF THE REGION, AND IS DESIRED BY OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES.
B. SINO-SOVIET RIVALRY IN THE REGION WILL NOT END WITH THE WAR BUT WILL PROBABLY INTENSIFY, MAKING US AND JAPANESE INFLUENCE WELCOME TO AREA GOVERNMENTS AS BALANCING
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FACTORS.

C. PRC INFLUENCE IN SAEA WILL INCREASE. THAILAND WILL ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH PEKING SOON, AND THE PHILIPPINES WILL FOLLOW SUIT SOMETIME THIS SUMMER. JAKARTA WILL PROBABLY WAIT UNTIL AFTER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN 1977.

D. INDONESIA IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT COUNTRY TO JAPAN IN SE ASIA, THE RESULT OF RESOURCE AVAILABILITY, OPEC MEMBERSHIP, AND LOCATION ON ITS TANKER ROUTE TO MIDDLE EAST. ITS IMPORTANCE WILL INCREASE THROUGH INDONESIA'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN ASEAN.

E. NO DRAMATIC POLITICAL CHANGES WITHIN THE COUNTRIES BEYOND INDOCHINA ARE EXPECTED. THAILAND'S FOREIGN POLICY ADJUSTMENTS FAVORING THE COMMUNISTS WILL NOT CHANGE THE CONSERVATIVE CAST OF THAI SOCIETY. THE INSURGENCY ALONG THAILAND'S BORDERS WILL GROW IF HANOI INCREASES SUPPORT, BUT WILL NOT MAKE SIGNIFICANT INROADS AS LONG AS THE RTG REMAINS RESPONSIVE TO POPULAR NEEDS. THE PHASEOUT OF US BASES WILL STRENGTHEN THE THAI GOVERNMENT'S POSITION BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. THE PHILIPPINES ARE UNLIKELY TO ALTER DRASTICALLY EITHER THEIR ORIENTATION OR SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE US. MARCOS' RHETORIC, INTENDED FOR AUDIENCES IN PEKING AND HANOI, DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE PHILIPPINES HAVE FOUND ALTERNATIVES MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN RELIANCE ON THE UNITED STATES. DESPITE THEIR PROBLEMS, MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, AND INDONESIA ARE BASICALLY HEALTHY NATIONS WITH VIABLE GOVERNMENTS. BURMA WILL DROOP ALONG ON ITS ISOLATIONIST COURSE, UNTHREATENING AND ESSENTIALLY UNTHREATENED.

5. POLICY RESPONSES --PRESENT EVIDENCE STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT JAPANESE DECISION MAKERS DO NOT BELIEVE THE "NEW SITUATION"

IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WILL REQUIRE ANY FUNDAMENTAL POLICY CHANGES. THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF JAPAN'S POLICY AS PRESENTLY PERCEIVED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- A. ALTHOUGH JAPAN MUST ADJUST TO A LESS DECISIVE US POSITION IN SEA, IT WILL NOT BE TEMPTED TO TAKE OVER THE US ROLE IN THE AREA. HOWEVER, UNTIL THE UNITED STATES SORTS OUT ITS OWN POLICY TOWARD THE GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA, THE JAPANESE SEE THEMSELVES MOVING OUT AHEAD OF THEIR MAJOR ALLY, PARTICULARLY WHERE RELATIONS WITH THE NEWLY FORMED COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS OF INDOCHINA ARE CONCERNED.
 - B. ADJUSTING TO HANOI'S ASCENDENT POSITION IN INDOCHINA,
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JAPAN WILL ACCELERATE THE POLICY ADOPTED AFTER THE PARIS ACCORDS WERE SIGNED IN 1973 OF DEVELOPING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE DRV. JAPAN WILL SEEK RELATIONS WITH THE NEW CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT AND MAKE WHATEVER ADJUSTMENTS MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN ACCESS IN LAOS.

C. JAPAN'S NORMAL CAUTION WILL BE TEMPERED AS USUAL BY SENSITIVITY TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN CONCERNS ABOUT JAPAN'S INFLUENCE AND PAST RECORD.

D. JAPAN WILL EMPHASIZE COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH ASEAN STATES BOTH TO BOLSTER THESE GOVERNMENTS VIS-A-VIS HANOI AND TO ASSURE CONTINUED ENTREE TO THE AREA. THE GOJ WILL BE ALERT TO LARGER REGIONAL GROUPINGS AND MEETINGS OF ASIAN NATIONS AND WILL PARTICIPATE SELECTIVELY.

E. JAPAN WILL EXPLOIT ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES RELATING TO EFFORTS BY NEW COMMUNIST COUNTRIES TO REBUILD THEIR ECONOMIES AFTER WAR, USING BOTH BILATERAL LINKS AND MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS. JAPAN WILL REDOUBLE EFFORTS TO EXPAND JAPANESE EXPORTS TO INDOCHINESE STATES. CHANCES FOR SUCCESS SEEM VERY GOOD IN VIEW OF JAPAN'S LOCATION AND COMPETITIVENESS IN MANY NEEDED ITEMS. AT SAME TIME, JAPAN WILL EXPAND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN ASEAN STATES, PARTICULARLY THAILAND AND PHILIPPINES. IT WILL PAY GREATER ATTENTION TO DEVELOPMENT OF MORE BALANCED TRADE AND PROMOTE FURTHER INVESTMENT WHEN ACCEPTABLE TO NATIONS CONCERNED.

F. JAPAN WILL RESPOND TO THE INITIATIVES OF OTHER COUNTRIES, AND PERHAPS MAKE SOME INITIATIVES OF ITS OWN, TO PROMOTE THE USE OF MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS AS CHANNELS FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND ASSISTANCE. IN SOME SITUATIONS, IT WILL FIND MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS A CONVENIENT WAY TO MAKE AID MORE PALATABLE TO RECIPIENTS, KEEP JAPAN'S POLITICAL PROFILE LOW, AND SPREAD FINANCIAL RISKS.

6. JAPAN WILL AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN SINO-SOVIET RIVALRIES AS THEY DEVELOP IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. IT WILL TRY TO MAINTAIN THE "BALANCED" POSTURE THAT IT ADOPTS TOWARD THE USSR AND THE PRC ELSEWHERE.

7. UNITED STATES INTERESTS -- IN THE EMBASSY'S VIEW, THE ROLE THAT THE JAPANESE ENVISION FOR THEMSELVES IN

SEA CAN BE HELPFUL IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

A. JAPAN'S EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DRV ECONOMY
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AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF INDOCHINA NOTWITHSTANDING, ITS
CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMIC HEALTH OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES
WILL SERVE AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO HANOI'S INFLUENCE.

B. JAPAN'S DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH HANOI WILL PROVIDE US
WITH A RELIABLE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION, IF NEEDED.

C. JAPAN'S MULTILATERAL APPROACH TO RECONSTRUCTION
HELPS MAINTAIN A DIVERSITY OF ACCESS TO THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN
COUNTRIES, FACILITATING A ROLE IN THE AREA FOR OTHER GOVERN-
MENTS IN EUROPE AND AUSTRALASIA WHOSE INTERESTS WE SHARE.

D. JAPAN'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE AMONG THE ASEAN
COUNTRIES, WHICH WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY HARNESSSED TO GAIN SUPPORT
FOR ISSUES LIKE THE KHMER RESOLUTIONS IN THE UN, SHOULD NOT
BE AFFECTED BY HANOI'S VICTORY. IF ANYTHING, THE ASEAN
NATIONS, SEEKING BALANCING INFLUENCES TO HELP COMPENSATE FOR
RECENT POWER SHIFTS, MAY BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO JAPANESE
INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN SUCH EFFORTS.

8. IN SUM, WE EXPECT JAPAN TO PLAY A BUSY AND CONSTUCTIVE
ROLE IN THE AREA THAT WILL PARALLEL AND SUPPORT MANY OF OUR
INTERESTS. WE ALSO EXPECT THAT THE GOJ WILL WANT TO CONSULT
REGUALRLY AND CONCERT WITH THE UNITED STATES AS IT SEEKS TO
PLAY THIS ROLE.

9. EMBASSY PREPARING COMPANION PIECE ON JAPANESE INTERESTS
AND POLICY IN NORTHEAST ASIA.
HODGSON

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